

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Response in reply to the July 9, 2008 Office Action. Claims 1, 18, and 36 have been amended. Claims 43 and 44 have been added. No new matter was added by these amendments or new claims. Applicants have submitted a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement with this Response. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement and any other fees due.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 18 to 23, 28 to 30, 33 to 39, 41 and 42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over United States Patent No. 6,832,957 Falconer ("Falconer") in view of UK Patent Application No. GB 2083936 to Hurst et al. ("Hurst"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. Nevertheless, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 18, and 36 to clarify certain of the existing claims.

Falconer discloses a gaming device including multiple sets of reels. A player places wagers on one or more paylines associated with each of the sets of reels. Each set of reels independently randomly generates an outcome including a plurality of symbols. The gaming device determines if the player is entitled to any awards by checking the symbols associated with each of the paylines wagered on by the player. If the player is entitled to an award, the gaming device provides the player with such an award.

Thus, in Falconer, each set of reels generates its own respective outcome. As discussed in the last Response, in one embodiment, a player is provided with an award if a designated symbol occurs once on one set of reels, twice on a second set of reels and three times on a third set of reels. (See column 7, lines 36 to 60). If the additional sets of reels were copies of the first set of reels, all of the sets of reels would generate the same outcome, and this embodiment would not make sense. In another embodiment of Falconer, the gaming device provides a bonus award if the same combination of symbols appears on a payline in two or more sets of reels. (See column 8, lines 6 to 9). Similarly, this embodiment would not make sense if each of the additional sets of reels were copies of the first set of reels.

Hurst discloses a slot-type gaming device. In one embodiment, at random "after a game" (page 2, line 2) a reproduction of the reels may be displayed on a screen. In Hurst, the reproduction of the reels occurs randomly after a play of the game, not for each play of the game.

Page 11 of the Office Action stated:

[r]egarding Applicant's argument that embodiments of Falconer do not make sense when combined with the teachings of Hurst: Although the two embodiments mentioned would not make sense in combination with Hurst, the embodiment which awards a player upon the occurrence of a winning combination occurring on any wagered upon payline would make sense in the context of the claimed invention when combined with Hurst.

Applicants have amended certain claims for clarity. For example, amended Claim 1 includes at least one processor programmed to operate with at least one display device for each play of a game to: separately and simultaneously display a plurality of reel displays of a set of reels, wherein each of the reel displays includes a copy of the set of reels and is associated with a different one of a plurality of paylines; activate the set of reels to generate a plurality of symbols based on a random determination; display the same plurality of the symbols generated on the set of reels based on the same random determination on each of the reel displays, wherein each reel display identifies a combination of symbols occurring on a different one of the plurality of paylines; and provide an award to a player based on any winning combinations of symbols occurring on the paylines. Amended independent Claims 18 and 36, along with Claim 37 and new Claims 43 and 44 included claim language similar to the above-emphasized language.

The Office Action appears to reason that in Falconer, if a player wagers on paylines on multiple sets of reels and the sets of reels happen to generate the same set of symbols, then Falconer discloses displaying a copy of a set of reels. However, in Falconer each set of reels generates a plurality of symbols based on a different random determination. Using the same random determination to generate a plurality of symbols in Falconer would not make sense because the plurality of symbols generated on each set of reels would always be the same, enabling players to simply bet on the same payline of each set of reels and receive duplicative awards.

Further, one of ordinary skill of art would have no reason to combine any embodiment disclosed in Falconer with Hurst. In Hurst, the reproduction of the reels occurs randomly after a play of the game, not for each play of the game. The Office Action cited page 3, lines 42 to 44 of Hurst which includes Claim 10 of Hurst, stating: "10. An amusement machine as claimed in claims 8 or 9, wherein a simulation of the reel mechanism is displayed upon the screen." [Emphasis added]. Applicants still submit in view of page 2, line 2 of Hurst that such simulation occurs after a play of the game. Regardless, Claim 1 for example, includes a plurality of reel displays of a set of reels. No matter how Hurst is interpreted, Hurst clearly does not disclose multiple "simulations" of its reel mechanism; rather, Hurst only discloses one simulation of the reel mechanism. For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 18 to 23, 28 to 30, 33 to 39, 41 and 42 are patentable over the combination of Falconer and Hurst and are in condition for formal allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 3 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Application No. 2004/0137978 to Cole et al. ("Cole"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 3 and 4 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Cole and are in condition for formal allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 7 to 11 and 24 to 27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Patent No. 6,336,863 to Baerlocher et al. ("Baerlocher"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 7 to 11 and 24 to 27 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Baerlocher and stand in condition for formal allowance.

The Office Action rejected Claims 16, 31 and 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Patent Publication No. 2002/0082075 to Meyer ("Meyer"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 16, 31 and 40 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Meyer and stand in condition for formal allowance.

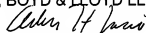
The Office Action rejected Claims 17 and 32 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Falconer in view of Hurst and United States Patent Publication No. 2003/0017868 to Crawford ("Crawford"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection. For the same reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent Claims 17 and 32 are patentable over the combination of Falconer, Hurst and Crawford and stand in condition for formal allowance.

Applicants have made an earnest endeavor to place this application in condition for formal allowance and in the absence of more pertinent art, such action is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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